

AN ACT

relating to procedures for taking possession of a child and for certain hearings in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship involving the Department of Family and Protective Services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 155.201, Family Code, is amended by adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(d) On receiving notice that a court exercising jurisdiction under Chapter 262 has ordered the transfer of a suit under Section 262.203(a)(2), the court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction shall, in accordance with the requirements of Section 155.204(i), transfer the proceedings to the court in which the suit under Chapter 262 is pending within the time required by Section 155.207(a).

SECTION 2. Section 155.204(i), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(i) If a transfer order has been signed by a court exercising jurisdiction under Chapter 262, the Department of Family and Protective Services shall ~~[a party may]~~ file the transfer order with the clerk of the court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction. On receipt and without a hearing or further order from the court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction, the clerk of the court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction shall transfer the files as provided by this subchapter within the time required by Section

1 155.207(a).

2 SECTION 3. Subchapter A, Chapter 262, Family Code, is  
3 amended by adding Section 262.013 to read as follows:

4 Sec. 262.013. FILING REQUIREMENT FOR PETITION REGARDING  
5 MORE THAN ONE CHILD. Each suit under this chapter based on  
6 allegations of abuse or neglect arising from the same incident or  
7 occurrence and involving children that live in the same home must be  
8 filed in the same court.

9 SECTION 4. Section 262.101, Family Code, is amended to read  
10 as follows:

11 Sec. 262.101. FILING PETITION BEFORE TAKING POSSESSION OF  
12 CHILD. An original suit filed by a governmental entity that  
13 requests permission to take possession of a child without prior  
14 notice and a hearing must be supported by an affidavit sworn to by a  
15 person with personal knowledge and stating facts sufficient to  
16 satisfy a person of ordinary prudence and caution that:

17 (1) there is an immediate danger to the physical  
18 health or safety of the child or the child has been a victim of  
19 neglect or sexual abuse;

20 (2) and that continuation in the home would be  
21 contrary to the child's welfare;

22 (3) ~~(2)~~ there is no time, consistent with the  
23 physical health or safety of the child, for a full adversary hearing  
24 under Subchapter C; and

25 (4) ~~(3)~~ reasonable efforts, consistent with the  
26 circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made  
27 to prevent or eliminate the need for the removal of the child.

1 SECTION 5. Section 262.1015(d), Family Code, is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3 (d) A temporary restraining order under this section  
4 expires not later than the 14th day after the date the order was  
5 rendered, unless the court grants an extension under Section  
6 262.201(e) [~~262.201(a-3)~~].

7 SECTION 6. Section 262.102(a), Family Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 (a) Before a court may, without prior notice and a hearing,  
10 issue a temporary order for the conservatorship of a child under  
11 Section 105.001(a)(1) or a temporary restraining order or  
12 attachment of a child authorizing a governmental entity to take  
13 possession of a child in a suit brought by a governmental entity,  
14 the court must find that:

15 (1) there is an immediate danger to the physical  
16 health or safety of the child or the child has been a victim of  
17 neglect or sexual abuse;

18 (2) (2) [~~and that~~] continuation in the home would be  
19 contrary to the child's welfare;

20 (3) (3) [~~(2)~~] there is no time, consistent with the  
21 physical health or safety of the child and the nature of the  
22 emergency, for a full adversary hearing under Subchapter C; and

23 (4) (4) [~~(3)~~] reasonable efforts, consistent with the  
24 circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made  
25 to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child.

26 SECTION 7. Section 262.103, Family Code, is amended to read  
27 as follows:

1           Sec. 262.103. DURATION OF TEMPORARY ORDER, TEMPORARY  
2 RESTRAINING ORDER, AND ATTACHMENT. A temporary order, temporary  
3 restraining order, or attachment of the child issued under Section  
4 262.102(a) expires not later than 14 days after the date it is  
5 issued unless it is extended as provided by the Texas Rules of Civil  
6 Procedure or Section 262.201(e) [~~262.201(a-3)~~].

7           SECTION 8. Section 262.105, Family Code, is amended to read  
8 as follows:

9           Sec. 262.105. FILING PETITION AFTER TAKING POSSESSION OF  
10 CHILD IN EMERGENCY. (a) When a child is taken into possession  
11 without a court order, the person taking the child into possession,  
12 without unnecessary delay, shall:

13                   (1) file a suit affecting the parent-child  
14 relationship;

15                   (2) request the court to appoint an attorney ad litem  
16 for the child; and

17                   (3) request an initial hearing to be held by no later  
18 than the first business [~~working~~] day after the date the child is  
19 taken into possession.

20           (b) An original suit filed by a governmental entity after  
21 taking possession of a child under Section 262.104 must be  
22 supported by an affidavit stating facts sufficient to satisfy a  
23 person of ordinary prudence and caution that:

24                   (1) based on the affiant's personal knowledge or on  
25 information furnished by another person corroborated by the  
26 affiant's personal knowledge, one of the following circumstances  
27 existed at the time the child was taken into possession:

1           (A) there was an immediate danger to the physical  
2 health or safety of the child;

3           (B) the child was the victim of sexual abuse or of  
4 trafficking under Section 20A.02 or 20A.03, Penal Code;

5           (C) the parent or person who had possession of  
6 the child was using a controlled substance as defined by Chapter  
7 481, Health and Safety Code, and the use constituted an immediate  
8 danger to the physical health or safety of the child; or

9           (D) the parent or person who had possession of  
10 the child permitted the child to remain on premises used for the  
11 manufacture of methamphetamine; and

12           (2) based on the affiant's personal knowledge:

13           (A) continuation of the child in the home would  
14 have been contrary to the child's welfare;

15           (B) there was no time, consistent with the  
16 physical health or safety of the child, for a full adversary hearing  
17 under Subchapter C; and

18           (C) reasonable efforts, consistent with the  
19 circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made  
20 to prevent or eliminate the need for the removal of the child.

21           SECTION 9. Sections 262.106(a) and (d), Family Code, are  
22 amended to read as follows:

23           (a) The court in which a suit has been filed after a child  
24 has been taken into possession without a court order by a  
25 governmental entity shall hold an initial hearing on or before the  
26 first business [~~working~~] day after the date the child is taken into  
27 possession. The court shall render orders that are necessary to

1 protect the physical health and safety of the child. If the court  
2 is unavailable for a hearing on the first business [~~working~~] day,  
3 then, and only in that event, the hearing shall be held no later  
4 than the first business [~~working~~] day after the court becomes  
5 available, provided that the hearing is held no later than the third  
6 business [~~working~~] day after the child is taken into possession.

7 (d) For the purpose of determining under Subsection (a) the  
8 first business [~~working~~] day after the date the child is taken into  
9 possession, the child is considered to have been taken into  
10 possession by the Department of Family and Protective Services on  
11 the expiration of the five-day period permitted under Section  
12 [262.007\(c\)](#) or [262.110\(b\)](#), as appropriate.

13 SECTION 10. Section [262.107\(a\)](#), Family Code, is amended to  
14 read as follows:

15 (a) The court shall order the return of the child at the  
16 initial hearing regarding a child taken in possession without a  
17 court order by a governmental entity unless the court is satisfied  
18 that:

19 (1) the evidence shows that one of the following  
20 circumstances exists:

21 (A) there is a continuing danger to the physical  
22 health or safety of the child if the child is returned to the  
23 parent, managing conservator, possessory conservator, guardian,  
24 caretaker, or custodian who is presently entitled to possession of  
25 the child;

26 (B) [~~or the evidence shows that~~] the child has  
27 been the victim of sexual abuse or of trafficking under Section

1 20A.02 or 20A.03, Penal Code, on one or more occasions and that  
2 there is a substantial risk that the child will be the victim of  
3 sexual abuse or of trafficking in the future;

4 (C) the parent or person who has possession of  
5 the child is currently using a controlled substance as defined by  
6 Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, and the use constitutes an  
7 immediate danger to the physical health or safety of the child; or

8 (D) the parent or person who has possession of  
9 the child has permitted the child to remain on premises used for the  
10 manufacture of methamphetamine;

11 (2) continuation of the child in the home would be  
12 contrary to the child's welfare; and

13 (3) reasonable efforts, consistent with the  
14 circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made  
15 to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child.

16 SECTION 11. Section 262.109(b), Family Code, is amended to  
17 read as follows:

18 (b) The written notice must be given as soon as practicable,  
19 but in any event not later than the first business [~~working~~] day  
20 after the date the child is taken into possession.

21 SECTION 12. Subchapter B, Chapter 262, Family Code, is  
22 amended by adding Section 262.1131 to read as follows:

23 Sec. 262.1131. TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER BEFORE FULL  
24 ADVERSARY HEARING. In a suit filed under Section 262.113, the court  
25 may render a temporary restraining order as provided by Section  
26 105.001.

27 SECTION 13. Section 262.201, Family Code, is amended to

1 read as follows:

2           Sec. 262.201. FULL ADVERSARY HEARING; FINDINGS OF THE  
3 COURT. (a) In a suit filed under Section 262.101 or 262.105,  
4 unless [~~Unless~~] the child has already been returned to the parent,  
5 managing conservator, possessory conservator, guardian, caretaker,  
6 or custodian entitled to possession and the temporary order, if  
7 any, has been dissolved, a full adversary hearing shall be held not  
8 later than the 14th day after the date the child was taken into  
9 possession by the governmental entity, unless the court grants an  
10 extension under Subsection (e) or (e-1) [~~(a-3)~~].

11           (b) A full adversary hearing in a suit filed under Section  
12 262.113 requesting possession of a child shall be held not later  
13 than the 30th day after the date the suit is filed.

14           (c) [~~(a-1)~~] Before commencement of the full adversary  
15 hearing, the court must inform each parent not represented by an  
16 attorney of:

- 17                   (1) the right to be represented by an attorney; and  
18                   (2) if a parent is indigent and appears in opposition  
19 to the suit, the right to a court-appointed attorney.

20           (d) [~~(a-2)~~] If a parent claims indigence and requests the  
21 appointment of an attorney before the full adversary hearing, the  
22 court shall require the parent to complete and file with the court  
23 an affidavit of indigence. The court may consider additional  
24 evidence to determine whether the parent is indigent, including  
25 evidence relating to the parent's income, source of income, assets,  
26 property ownership, benefits paid in accordance with a federal,  
27 state, or local public assistance program, outstanding

1 obligations, and necessary expenses and the number and ages of the  
2 parent's dependents. If the appointment of an attorney for the  
3 parent is requested, the court shall make a determination of  
4 indigence before commencement of the full adversary hearing. If  
5 the court determines the parent is indigent, the court shall  
6 appoint an attorney to represent the parent.

7 (e) [~~(a-3)~~] The court may, for good cause shown, postpone  
8 the full adversary hearing for not more than seven days from the  
9 date of the attorney's appointment to provide the attorney time to  
10 respond to the petition and prepare for the hearing. The court may  
11 shorten or lengthen the extension granted under this subsection if  
12 the parent and the appointed attorney agree in writing. If the  
13 court postpones the full adversary hearing, the court shall extend  
14 a temporary order, temporary restraining order, or attachment  
15 issued by the court under Section 262.102(a) or Section 262.1131  
16 for the protection of the child until the date of the rescheduled  
17 full adversary hearing.

18 (e-1) If a parent who is not indigent appears in opposition  
19 to the suit, the court may, for good cause shown, postpone the full  
20 adversary hearing for not more than seven days from the date of the  
21 parent's appearance to allow the parent to hire an attorney or to  
22 provide the parent's attorney time to respond to the petition and  
23 prepare for the hearing. A postponement under this subsection is  
24 subject to the limits and requirements prescribed by Subsection  
25 (e).

26 (f) [~~(a-4)~~] The court shall ask all parties present at the  
27 full adversary hearing whether the child or the child's family has a

1 Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe  
2 with which the child may be associated.

3 (g) In a suit filed under Section 262.101 or 262.105, at  
4 ~~[(b) — At]~~ the conclusion of the full adversary hearing, the court  
5 shall order the return of the child to the parent, managing  
6 conservator, possessory conservator, guardian, caretaker, or  
7 custodian entitled to possession unless the court finds sufficient  
8 evidence to satisfy a person of ordinary prudence and caution that:

9 (1) there was a danger to the physical health or safety  
10 of the child, including a danger that the child would be a victim of  
11 trafficking under Section 20A.02 or 20A.03, Penal Code, which was  
12 caused by an act or failure to act of the person entitled to  
13 possession and for the child to remain in the home is contrary to  
14 the welfare of the child;

15 (2) the urgent need for protection required the  
16 immediate removal of the child and reasonable efforts, consistent  
17 with the circumstances and providing for the safety of the child,  
18 were made to eliminate or prevent the child's removal; and

19 (3) reasonable efforts have been made to enable the  
20 child to return home, but there is a substantial risk of a  
21 continuing danger if the child is returned home.

22 (h) In a suit filed under Section 262.101 or 262.105, if  
23 ~~[(c) — If]~~ the court finds sufficient evidence to satisfy a person  
24 of ordinary prudence and caution that there is a continuing danger  
25 to the physical health or safety of the child and for the child to  
26 remain in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child, the  
27 court shall issue an appropriate temporary order under Chapter 105.

1        (i) In determining whether there is a continuing danger to  
2 the physical health or safety of the child under Subsection (g), the  
3 court may consider whether the household to which the child would be  
4 returned includes a person who:

5            (1) has abused or neglected another child in a manner  
6 that caused serious injury to or the death of the other child; or

7            (2) has sexually abused another child.

8        (j) In a suit filed under Section 262.113, at the conclusion  
9 of the full adversary hearing, the court shall issue an appropriate  
10 temporary order under Chapter 105 if the court finds sufficient  
11 evidence to satisfy a person of ordinary prudence and caution that:

12            (1) there is a continuing danger to the physical  
13 health or safety of the child caused by an act or failure to act of  
14 the person entitled to possession of the child and continuation of  
15 the child in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare; and

16            (2) reasonable efforts, consistent with the  
17 circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made  
18 to prevent or eliminate the need for the removal of the child.

19        (k) If the court finds that the child requires protection  
20 from family violence, as that term is defined by Section 71.004, by  
21 a member of the child's family or household, the court shall render  
22 a protective order for the child under Title 4.

23        (1) The court shall require each parent, alleged father, or  
24 relative of the child before the court to complete the proposed  
25 child placement resources form provided under Section 261.307 and  
26 file the form with the court, if the form has not been previously  
27 filed with the court, and provide the Department of Family and

1 Protective Services with information necessary to locate any other  
2 absent parent, alleged father, or relative of the child. The court  
3 shall inform each parent, alleged father, or relative of the child  
4 before the court that the person's failure to submit the proposed  
5 child placement resources form will not delay any court proceedings  
6 relating to the child.

7 (m) The court shall inform each parent in open court that  
8 parental and custodial rights and duties may be subject to  
9 restriction or to termination unless the parent or parents are  
10 willing and able to provide the child with a safe environment. [~~If~~  
11 ~~the court finds that the child requires protection from family~~  
12 ~~violence by a member of the child's family or household, the court~~  
13 ~~shall render a protective order under Title 4 for the child. In~~  
14 ~~this subsection, "family violence" has the meaning assigned by~~  
15 ~~Section 71.004.~~

16 [~~(d) In determining whether there is a continuing danger to~~  
17 ~~the physical health or safety of the child, the court may consider~~  
18 ~~whether the household to which the child would be returned includes~~  
19 ~~a person who:~~

20 [~~(1) has abused or neglected another child in a manner~~  
21 ~~that caused serious injury to or the death of the other child; or~~

22 [~~(2) has sexually abused another child.]~~

23 (n) [~~(e)~~] The court shall place a child removed from the  
24 child's custodial parent with the child's noncustodial parent or  
25 with a relative of the child if placement with the noncustodial  
26 parent is inappropriate, unless placement with the noncustodial  
27 parent or a relative is not in the best interest of the child.

1           (o) [~~(f)~~] When citation by publication is needed for a  
2 parent or alleged or probable father in an action brought under this  
3 chapter because the location of the parent, alleged father, or  
4 probable father is unknown, the court may render a temporary order  
5 without delay at any time after the filing of the action without  
6 regard to whether notice of the citation by publication has been  
7 published.

8           (p) [~~(g)~~] For the purpose of determining under Subsection  
9 (a) the 14th day after the date the child is taken into possession,  
10 a child is considered to have been taken into possession by the  
11 Department of Family and Protective Services on the expiration of  
12 the five-day period permitted under Section 262.007(c) or  
13 262.110(b), as appropriate.

14           SECTION 14. Section 262.203(a), Family Code, is amended to  
15 read as follows:

16           (a) On the motion of a party or the court's own motion, if  
17 applicable, the court that rendered the temporary order shall in  
18 accordance with procedures provided by Chapter 155:

19                   (1) transfer the suit to the court of continuing,  
20 exclusive jurisdiction, if any, within the time required by Section  
21 155.207(a), if the court finds that the transfer is:

22                                   (A) necessary for the convenience of the parties;  
23 and

24                                   (B) in the best interest of the child;

25                   (2) [~~if grounds exist for mandatory transfer from the~~  
26 ~~court of continuing, exclusive jurisdiction under Section~~  
27 ~~155.201,~~] order transfer of the suit from the [~~that~~] court of

1 continuing, exclusive jurisdiction; or

2           (3) if grounds exist for transfer based on improper  
3 venue, order transfer of the suit to the court having venue of the  
4 suit under Chapter 103.

5           SECTION 15. Section 262.205, Family Code, is repealed.

6           SECTION 16. The changes in law made by this Act apply only  
7 to a suit affecting the parent-child relationship that is filed on  
8 or after the effective date of this Act. A suit filed before the  
9 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the  
10 date the suit is filed, and the former law is continued in effect  
11 for that purpose.

12           SECTION 17. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 999 passed the Senate on May 1, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; May 25, 2017, Senate refused to concur in House amendments and requested appointment of Conference Committee; May 26, 2017, House granted request of the Senate; May 28, 2017, Senate adopted Conference Committee Report by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 999 passed the House, with amendments, on May 18, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 146, Nays 0, two present not voting; May 26, 2017, House granted request of the Senate for appointment of Conference Committee; May 28, 2017, House adopted Conference Committee Report by the following vote: Yeas 146, Nays 0, two present not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor